

North Atlantic swordfish are overfished, but appear to be recovering as a result of recent international and domestic conservation and management measures. It is now more important than ever to protect small swordfish in order to rebuild the population. The United States has agreed to an international rebuilding program and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) has implemented measures to rebuild North Atlantic swordfish. These measures include commercial area closures, permits, minimum sizes, accounting for discard mortality, and a recreational bag limit.

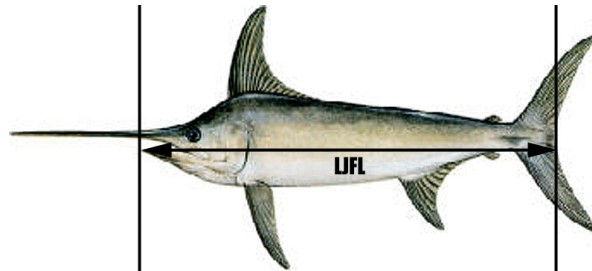
### HMS Angling Permit

Owners of vessels used to fish recreationally (*i.e.*, no sale of fish) for Atlantic HMS (Atlantic tunas, billfish, sharks and swordfish) are required to obtain a HMS Angling Category permit from NOAA Fisheries. For North Atlantic swordfish, this permit requirement is applicable only when fishing in Federal waters, although state regulations may also apply. Atlantic tunas Angling category permits issued for the 2002 fishing year will meet the HMS Angling permit requirements through May 31, 2003. Owners of charter or headboat vessels used to fish for Atlantic HMS must obtain an annual HMS Charter/headboat permit. Permits are available by calling 1-888-872-8862 or by logging onto [www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com).

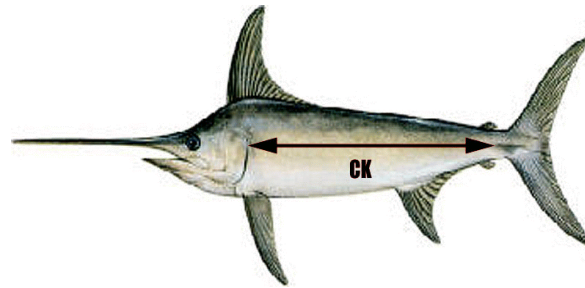
### Minimum Size & Weight Limit

Whole Fish - 47" lower jaw fork length (LJFL)

Head or Tail Removed - 29" cleithrum to caudal keel (CK)



Minimum Dressed Weight - 33 lb



These size and weight limits apply to U.S. citizens and U.S.-flagged vessels throughout the Atlantic Ocean and adjacent waters. Fish must be kept in whole or dressed form through landing. "Dressed" indicates a headed/gutted fish with some or all fins removed. Fishermen may not possess pieces of swordfish on board a vessel.

### Recreational Swordfish Bag Limit

One North Atlantic swordfish per person, up to three per vessel per day, may be retained. Regardless of the length of the trip no more than the daily limit of swordfish may be possessed on board a vessel, including those landed by a party/charter vessel. Recreational anglers may not land Atlantic swordfish south of 5°N latitude.

### No Sale by "Recreational" Fishermen

Fishermen are not permitted to sell, barter, or trade Atlantic swordfish or swordfish pieces without possessing a valid commercial swordfish permit. Because the commercial fishery is limited access, you cannot obtain a new permit from NOAA Fisheries. However, it is necessary for NOAA Fisheries to process permit transfers between buyer and seller.

### Recreational Reporting Requirements

Owners of recreational and charter/headboat vessels landing (*i.e.*, keeping) North Atlantic swordfish must report to NOAA Fisheries by calling toll-free 1-800-894-5528 within 24 hours of landing at the dock. During the call, the vessel owner will be asked to provide a contact phone number so that NOAA Fisheries can return the call and provide a confirmation of the reported landing. In Maryland and North Carolina vessel owners should report their recreational swordfish landings at state-operated reporting stations. For reporting information in Maryland, contact (410) 213-1531. In North Carolina, contact (800) 338-7804. Landings reported by registered tournament operators do not need to be reported by phone.

### Tournament Registration and Reporting

Persons responsible for maintaining records of participants and results used for awarding tournament points or prizes for Atlantic highly migratory species must register the tournament with NMFS at least four weeks prior to the event. A registration form is available at: [www.nmfspermits.com/TournamentInstructions.asp](http://www.nmfspermits.com/TournamentInstructions.asp)

The completed registration form may be faxed to NOAA Fisheries at (727) 570-5656. If you are selected for tournament reporting, NMFS will send you a reporting form that must be completed and returned to NOAA Fisheries within 7 days after tournament fishing has been completed.

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### **Swordfish Quotas**

All landed swordfish *and* those released dead during the fishing year (e.g., June 1 - May 31) are counted against the U.S. catch quota. *For information regarding landings and quotas, call 1-800-894-5528.*

### **General Information**

The HMS Division fax network provides updates on management actions. If your organization would like to be a member of our fax network, contact Tyson Kade at 301-713-2347.

### ***Check out these HMS Webpages & Info Lines...***

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hmspg.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hmspg.html)

[www.nmfspermits.com](http://www.nmfspermits.com)

1-888-872-8862 (HMS Permits)

1-800-894-5528 (Info Line)

### ***Tuna Issues***

HMS Northeast Regional Office  
Gloucester, MA  
978-281-9260

### ***Shark Issues***

HMS Headquarters  
Silver Spring, MD  
301-713-2347

### ***Swordfish & Billfish Issues***

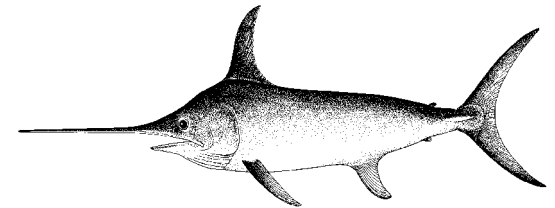
HMS Southeast Regional Office  
St. Petersburg, FL  
727-570-5447

**NOAA Fisheries**  
HMS Management Division  
9721 Executive Center Drive North  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702

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# **Atlantic Swordfish Management Program for Recreational Fishermen**



## **NOAA Fisheries**

**Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
Highly Migratory Species Management Division**

This pamphlet was prepared to provide a summary of recreational swordfish regulations, as of March 2003. A copy of complete fishery regulations that apply to recreational fishermen may be obtained by calling the Highly Migratory Species Management Division at 727-570-5447. Since fishery rules are subject to change, fishermen must familiarize themselves with the latest complete regulations and are responsible for complying with current official regulations.